



Human Rights Commission Minutes

Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Time: 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Location: Conducted by Remote Participation

Notice to the Public on meeting privacy In the interests of preventing abuse of video conferencing technology (i.e. Zoom Bombing) all participants, including members of the public, wishing to engage via the Zoom App must register for each meeting and will notice multi-step authentication protocols. Please allow additional time to join the meeting. Further, members of the public who wish to participate without providing their name may still do so by registering to receive the meeting info and using the telephone dial-in information provided.

Please read Governor Baker's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provision of Open Meeting Law for more information regarding virtual public hearings and meetings:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-meeting-law-order-march-12-2020/download>

Attendees: Co-Chair Carney, Co-Chair Soneja, Commissioners Minton, Bauer, Carey, Brown, Pusey, Jolin, Haynes, Horowitz, Grossman

Absent: Commissioner Rogers

DEI Office: Jillian Harvey

Intern: Sophie Schaedel

Community Members: Captain Kiernan, Rebecca Gruber, Crystal Howard

Meeting called to order at 8:00 pm by Co-chair Carney

Land acknowledgement by Co-chair Carney

Agenda

1. Remote Meeting Notice and Land Acknowledgement (5 min)
2. Review of Minutes (5 min)
 - a. Edit: Date for the next meeting next to be changed to March 16th
 - b. *Motion to approve as amended* by Commissioner Pusey, seconded by Commissioner Minton – Passed with 1 abstention (Commissioner Brown)
3. Review of Jan Community Input (1 min)
 - a. None
4. Incidents & Complaints (10 min) Commissioners Pusey & Jolin

- a. Menotomy Manor Housing Incident: Commissioner Pusey has provided resources to the complainant regarding housing discrimination
 - b. Graffiti incident at Masonic Temple – under investigation by the APD
 - c. Press release posted by APD and Attorney General re: arson case on Lake St.
- 5. Working Group Q&A (15 min)
 - a. Schools and Education
 - i. Heterogeneous Grouping Incentive: Heterogeneous grouping refers to (a) grouping arrangements in which whole classes of students of varying intellectual ability learn together in one classroom or (b) within-classroom groupings in which students of varying abilities learn together in cooperative learning arrangements.
 - 1. Pilot study proposal for ninth grade next year in English and Science – push back about including science in the pilot
 - 2. Objective to allow students to choose their interests and their placement
 - 3. Discussion: does the AHRC have jurisdiction?
 - a. Yes, because the outcomes focus on the narrow of the achievement gap
 - b. This grouping practice is associated with efforts to assure high academic standards for all students and to allow all students the benefits of access to high-level instructional practices
 - c. This model is already working at the elementary level as students are intentionally assigned to heterogeneous groups
 - d. Things to consider: What will class sizes look like? – will be improved, the teacher: student ratio will be more manageable; Will teachers have support in the classroom? – teachers were ready to take this own 2 years ago but due to the pandemic plans were deterred; Are we setting students up to fail coming out of a pandemic, ie – social/emotional considerations
 - e. *Motion to approve the editing of the letter by the Schools Working Group and fast track to Co-Chairs for approval by Commission Pusey, seconded by Commissioner Brown - Passed unanimously*
 - b. Outreach/Events
 - i. Lawn signs and bookmarks have been picked up
 - 1. To be dropped off at Ottoson, Robbins Library, Fox Library, and The Bookrack
 - ii. Black History Banners have been installed along Mass. Ave.
 - iii. Artist talk will be held on Feb 22nd, 6-7 pm
 - iv. Community conversations: summer events have been marked out for this year
 - c. Communications
 - i. Posted about Black History Month
 - ii. Met with Joan Roman (public information) – access to FB has been granted
 - iii. Mailchimp – question received for gaining access
 - iv. Commissioners asked to stop using town issued email addresses
- 6. Co-chair Report (5 min)
 - a. Town Manager Meeting

- i. Discussed potential warrant articles to review
 - 1. Domestic partners
 - 2. Facial recognition surveillance
 - 3. Increase diversity on commissions and boards
 - b. Meeting with Chief of Police
 - i. 2 social workers slated to be hired to the APD
 - ii. Members of the APD attended ABLE training through Georgetown University
 - iii. Reform commission to support bodycams
 - c. Co-Chairs
 - i. Met with new co-chairs
- 7. DEI Division updates (10 min) – Jillian
 - a. Board of Health voted to rescind the mask mandate in public spaces
 - i. In effect for Town staff on 2/22
 - ii. Businesses may decide to continue the mandate
 - b. Dr. Homan will be deciding about the mask mandate in schools – decision to be made by next month
 - c. Remote/hybrid plan not complete – AHRC will continue to meet virtually
 - d. ADA position to start in July
 - e. Outreach position goal is July
 - f. Equity audit – proposal submissions to close next week
 - g. Community conversations – 3 events over the summer – highlighting local voices
 - h. Lawn signs – possible spring event to have an outdoor AHRC event to hand out signs, once in-person coffee chats resume signs can be handed out
 - i. *Motion to co-sponsor neurodiversity training event with the Rainbow and Disability commission - \$250 per commission* – by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Bauer, passed unanimously
- 8. MAHRC – Co-Chair Soneja (1 min)
 - a. Many towns are holding events for Black History Month
 - b. Duxbury is holding a diversity summit
 - c. Great Barrington is holding an event honoring W.B Dubois
 - d. Discussion about secular displays on town property
 - e. Mayor of East Hampton looking to develop relationships with commissions around MA
- 9. Civilian Review Board Exploratory Committee – Commissioner Rogers (1 min)
 - a. Warrant article language has been approved – proposes an additional bylaw for a 9-member appointed commission
- 10. Warrant Article for AHRC bylaw edits – Commissioner Bauer (5 min)
 - a. Will be discussed at the Select Board Meeting on 2/23
- 11. Discuss issuing a statement about the treatment of Uyghurs and US Diplomatic Boycott of 2022 Winter Olympics: Commissioner Pusey (15 min)
 - a. The Uyghurs are a Muslim minority in China – the actions of China have been labeled as a genocide of the Uyghurs based on reports of established internment camps, sterilization of women, etc.
 - b. Discussion: education is needed on this topic, important to bring this to light given that travel restrictions are being lifted. Timing will not be based on the end of the Olympics. Include a tab about Islamophobia on the website with our statements and educational resources
 - c. Next month – include agenda items about statements for the situation in Ukraine and oppression of the Muslim population in India
- 12. Goals and Objectives for 2022: Discussion/Brainstorming (20 min)
 - a. Have in-person events for the community

- b. Inform our path forward with the DEI data from the 2021 Envision survey – report scheduled to go before Town Meeting
 - c. Focus on increasing our outreach and visibility, especially after COVID restrictions have been lifted
 - d. Streamline communication: address G-Suite account
 - e. Hold an in-person retreat
 - f. Discuss Commissioner involvement within the AHRC
13. Announcements (10 min)
- a. March 17 Friends of the Robbins Library panel discussion with AHRC commissioners
 - i. Panel discussion – Link will be sent to AHRC members
 - b. Incident Handling
 - i. Feb – Commissioner Jolin
 - ii. March – Commissioner Soneja
 - c. Reappointment
 - i. Reach out to appointing bodies to re-up position or step down as appropriate
 - d. Introduction to new Commissioner; Crystal Howard

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Pusey – approved unanimously

Next meeting: March 16, 2022, 8:00 pm, Remote Participation

Anyone needing accessibility information or other assistance to attend this meeting should contact Jillian Harvey, jharvey@town.arlington.ma.us. This meeting is open to all interested individuals.